WARS History 1985-1990

By Tom Kinahan N1CPE

Being the WARS president from 1985 to 1991, I'd like to tell you about some of our fun activities during this time, as we were a very active group then. WARS has always been a local leader in holiday Message fairs, and we start 1985 with a note that we had to cancel our 1984 holiday message fair, which had previously been held at the Natick Mall. This action was driven by the re-construction of the Natick Mall into what it is today. Plans are being made for both Novice and General Class license classes

The "NEW" Wellesley Repeater has finally arrived, to replace the previous split site system which was receiving 147.63 at Maugus Hill in Wellesley and transmitting from the Newton Wellesley Hospital on 147.03. This used a link frequency which is now the transmitting frequency of our current UHF Repeater 444.600 Mhz. The old system was getting challenging to keep operating, with the receive site transmitted signal drifting as the weather changed. To fund the new Kendecom 2M Repeater, we "passed the hat" to fund half from the club treasury and half from member donations. We asked individuals to contribute $100 if they could.

Word had come in from QST that W1TKZ had placed 4th place in the Multioperator category in the 1984 September VHF Contest from Mt Equinox in Vermont.

In spite of our Message Fair Cancellation in December, we obtained permission for a Valentines Day Message fair from Shoppers World in Framingham. Who wouldn't want a phone call from a stranger around Valentines Day with greetings from a friend? This event was before the then future rebuild of the old Shoppers World to the current configurations. This writer much preferred the old outdoor courtyard setup.

WARS has been a leader in the Communications for the BAA Boston Marathon, and April 1985's effort was no different. However, due to recent at the time FCC rulings that events like the Boston Marathon could not be supported with logistics over Amateur Radio (There was payment to winners) most operations had to be moved to Commercial Radios. Dick Paret, WA1ZLQ had been and continued to lead efforts with the Marathon by obtaining commercial radios, for WARS Members and some others to coordinate runner times and spotting. Members logged the first 100 male and 100 female runners and reported them to the Boston Marathon control center from each mile marker. WARS had members on the 17th floor of the Prudential building, on the 10th floor press room and the finish line computer truck and at every mile marker of the course.

Reports that the first WARS Packet Digipeater was on the air from Babson College using the callsign W1TKZ-1, which shortly later became the KT1K-1 digipeater on 145.01 MHz. Thanks are due to Bob Drapeau KT1K, the Babson College Police Chief for his efforts.

The June VHF Contest from Mt. Equinox was successful with 940 QSOs, 215 Grids and 253,700 points!

Mount Equinox in Bennington County Vermont. WARS ran VHF contests and supplied the Vintage Sports Car Club of America (VSCCA) hill climb with radio operators.

The Fall of 1985 marked the transition of the WARS presidency from Nels N1UR to myself. I was president until June 1991.

At the same time, WARS started a strong relationship with the American Red Cross. We were allowed to install a station and conduct our meetings at the Wellesley Red Cross at 211 Washington St. We installed a multiband vertical on the garage roof and essentially had access to the building at any time.

Our 1985 SET was led by Bob Drapeau KT1K, where we reported the traffic situation after a simulated earthquake, and we had a visit by a Boston Med Flight helicopter to the Babson College Campus.

These were the heydays of packet radio PBBS systems. This system at Babson could be used to connect home stations out to those Packet BBS systems reliably.

On October 12, 1985, thousands of people and at least 39 hams including WARS members assisted in the search for a missing Wayland Girl, Sarah Pryor. The search was unsuccessful on that day. Sadly, only small parts of Sarah's body were found years later.

WARS was leading the effort at the Boston Museum of Science (MOS) Ham Radio exhibit for April 26 and 27, 1986. WARS members led the Message Fair booth, where the public was able

to send a radiogram to anyone in the US with a general greeting from the Museum which they were visiting. WARS members transmitted the radiograms to Eastern Mass Traffic handlers on Packet radio from the museum floor. 212 pieces of traffic were generated, with 132 going out of state. Other displays were Amateur Fast Scan TV, CW Training, Emergency Communications and Satellite communications. All the stations at the MOS for that event used the callsign KA1SM (KA1 Science Museum).

Field Day 1986 was planned to be from a spot behind the Wellesley Town Hall. However construction was not completed there on time, and the Field Day moved to the Sprague School fields. Field Day '86 had 272 QSOs.

WARS had a tour of WCVB Channel 5 in Needham on May 13, 1986, arranged by Erik Thoreson K1OGF.

The KT1K-1 Digipeater at Babson College moved to 145.09 MHz for better BBS connectivity.

Over the summer of 1986, WARS members executed Field Day, the June VHF Contest and the Tinman Triathlon starting and ending in Wellesley. WARS coordinated the health and welfare communications for the New England Tinman Triathalon on July 13, 1986. The race which started in Wellesley at Morses Pond with a 1.2-mile swim, was followed by a 56-mile bike ride through Wellesley, Weston, Natick, Wayland, Lincoln, Sudbury, Maynard Hudson and Stow. Upon Return to the Wellesley High School, contestants started out on the last leg, a 13.1 mile run within Wellesley, Dover and Needham. We used the Wellesley and Maynard Repeater systems. Fortunately, only 1 person required medical assistance and was taken to Newton Wellesley Hospital with knee issues.

The June 1986 VHF contest netted 1,189 Contacts in 274 Grid Squares for 414,562 points! We added a new band to us, 903 MHz while working K3YTL (188 miles) on 903, our farthest contact on that band. We placed 3rd place in the Multi-operator class.

The WARS flea Market was held on September 28, 1986 at Wellesley High School.

We learned in June '86 that the Wellesley Hills Fire Station was being demolished for renovation, and we needed a place to put the town owned, but WARS used Generator and heavy equipment including towers and antennas.

WARS Again participated in the Wellesley Veterans Parate on October 17.

1986 had the transition of Spark Gap editor from Nels Anderson K1UR to Jon Freeman KA1NDX.

The Winter of 1987 had another fund-raising effort for a new Repeater antenna for the 147.03 repeater. Total cost was expected to be about $300. We used Station Master antennas but found quickly that they were not appropriate unless they were secured midway up the mast. They were very susceptible to internal elements breaking.

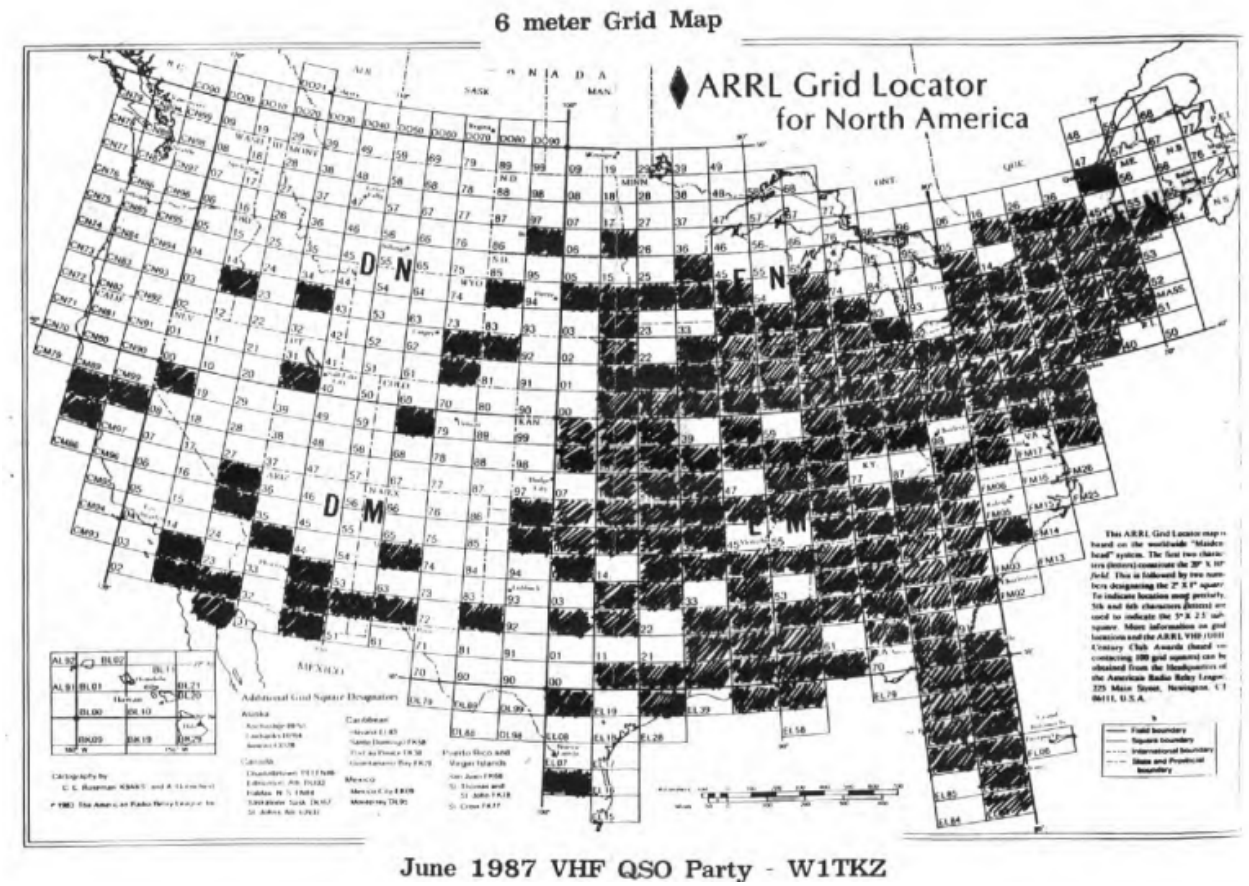
1987 Field Day was a 15A effort! Fifteen transmitters on emergency power! We conducted this effort from the Sprague School ball-fields. Everybody was asked to bring their radio and an antenna. Some coordination was required, and we did spread people out as much as possible. We took 2nd place in the country in the 15A Category!

In 1987, WARS voted to make comments to the FCC on the reallocation of the 220-222 MHz band. The effort of hams at that time was unsuccessful in preventing the reallocation. This frequency band was ultimately assigned to UPS using a new modulation mode called ACSB or Amplitude Compandored Side Band. It was to be used to report on package deliveries. Ultimately, this method was never completely successful and abandoned by UPS. I'm not aware of any operations in that band today in 2025.

While we have members with many different occupations, and the WARS repeater on 147.03 had touch tone access to a phone line to call the police. Frank Mackenzie-Lamb NG1I was a Wayland Police Officer and reminded us with a story on Police/Ham Radio relations in terms of Reporting Hints in the December 1987 Spark Gap.

June 1987 brought us news that Al Graf W1OQF had passed away. Al was a founding member of WARS and profiled in previous articles.

The June 1987 VHF Contest from Mt Equinox was a record event and we had 1,487 QSOs, 348 Grids (including 203 grids on 6m!) for 629K points. That's VUCC twice over in a weekend!



Grid-square map of our June 1987 QSO Party contest

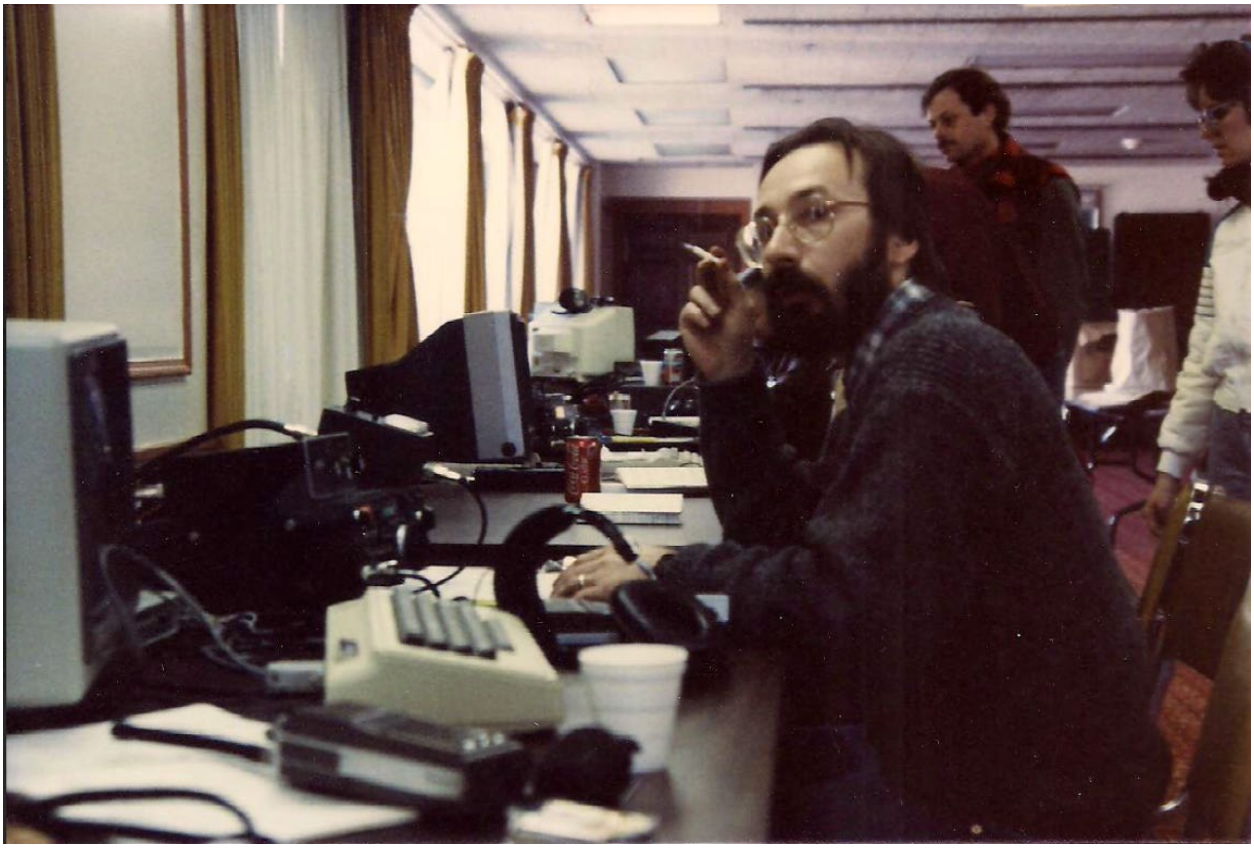
On May 31st 1987 WARS provided safety communications for the “Biathlon into Summer” sponsored by the Wellesley Raquet Club. No Emergencies were reported on the 95-degree day.

WARS provided communications for the Wellesley Veterans Parade on October. I remember marching in this parade in High School as a Baritone Horn Player for Weston High School in the 70’s. I recall WARS members set up on the Wellesley Hills library lawn in the 70s while I marched. WARS continued to support this parade well into the 2000’s. Our members worked to align parade marching units before they stepped off for the route from Wellesley Hills to downtown Wellesley along Washington St.

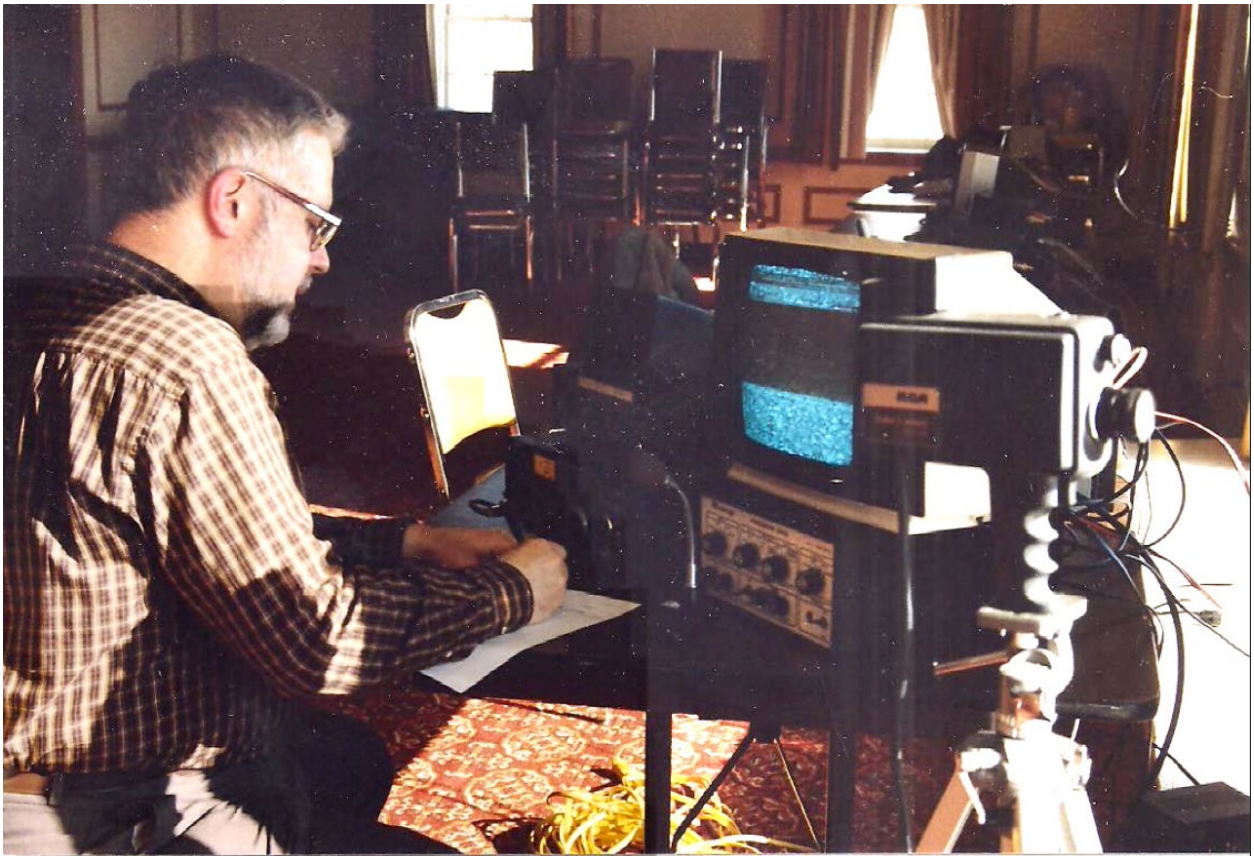
In late 1987, WARS started planning for the Celebration of the United States Constitution Bicentennial. Stations were permitted to alter their callsign and replace the digit in their callsign with the digits “200” during a single week during the year, aligning with the date that the state had ratified the Constitution, with prior coordination.

WARS received approval to operate W200TKZ during the week of Feb 6 to Feb 12, 1988.

We operated W200TKZ from Constitution Wharf in Charlestown on February 6, 1988 and from our Wellesley club Station at 211 Washington St on February 7-11, 1988. This operation was approved in conjunction with the National Park Service. The location was at the Visitors center at the USS Constitution. Operations were indoors, due to the recent snow and cold weather. SSTV images were sent of the USS Constitution. This operation set the stage for future operations at the pier beside the USS Constitution.



W200TKZ operation. Jed Weare, NF1Z.



Mort Cohan KA1IU Operating SSTV at W200TKZ Operation.

The USS Constitution ship, February 1988

Slow Scan TV image sent by W200TKZ, celebrating the United States Constitution Bicentennial, from the United States Ship Constitution.

Celebrating the United States Constitution at the U.S.S. Constitution

When the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society heard about the special 'W200' calls being issued, we naturally wanted to be part of it. We took note of the fact that it should reach many people and started brainstorming about how to reach many people. We were looking for a gimmick, something to catch the public's eye yet still be symbolic of the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. We tossed around things like operating from the Massachusetts State House, the Boston City Hall, but none of us really had any political connections. Finally, one member Bill Hanlon, N1ADY thought out loud, 'Why not from the U.S.S. Constitution?'

Why not indeed. We then began the process of finding out who to approach about getting a little space on or near the U.S.S. Constitution. In the mean time we got approval to operate the club station, W1TKZ as W200TKZ from 2 specific locations, the club station in Wellesley, and 'Near the U.S.S. Constitution, Boston, Massachusetts'.

The U.S.S. Constitution is the oldest commissioned ship in the U.S. Navy. First launched in 1797 she served in the war of 1812 where she gained the nickname 'Old

Ironsides'.

Approval came in from the ARRL and FCC, and that was all set, and finally, just 3 weeks before the event was to take place, approval to operate from the Visitors Center on Constitution Wharf. We talked it up on local repeaters, on HF nets, on international computer networks, and finally did it.

We were located on the second floor of a building, in an area that formerly was an Officers club for the Navy. Six massive bay windows looking out onto the snowy pier with the U.S.S. Constitution tied up. The Boston Harbor, and the Boston skyline also graced the view.

Here we were, on this historic site, where the British first landed to fight the battle of Bunker Hill graced by the beauty of the oldest and classiest commissioned ship in the United States Navy. On this location, the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society operated W200TKZ celebrating the 200th anniversary of the United States Constitution. It was no accident that exactly 200 years ago, to the day, on February 6, 1788 that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ratified the United States Constitution on the conditions that a Bill of Rights be passed to guarantee additional rights. Massachusetts was the 6th state to ratify the Constitution.

W200TKZ managed to work approximately 200 stations, stopping to chat with each one, explaining where we were and why, using a complement of dipoles and mobile antennas, operated SSTV, AMTOR, RTTY CW and SSB on 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters.

We had visitors to the station from as far away as Austria. Some in fact operated a little third party from the station.

The Club station W200TKZ operated for the rest of the week from the club station in Wellesley. From here a total QSO total of approximately 300 were obtained.

This was a real coming together of the ham radio community. More members showed to operate than our 15A Field day last year. Of course all hams were invited to help out, and many non-members did also.

Our next major task is to send QSLs to all a pile of

about 200 cards already received.

A big thank you goes out to the United States National Park Service at the Charlestown Navy Yard for their allowing us to use their facilities. To Mort Cohan KA1IU, who gained Park Service approval. To Dave Crocker W1TMO, of Crockergraphics in Needham who spent valuable time on making excellent badges for us to identify ourselves with. And to all the people that helped out operating W200TKZ : Jerry Driscoll KA1OOO, Larry Leblanc WA1MWF, Barry Kasindorf WA1YDL, Jed Weare NF1Z, Vern Valero ND1Z, Rita Baker N1DDI, Bill Baker KA1NKJ, John Stacy W1KIM, Diane KA1NOJ, Dave N1FJQ, Nate Keedy N1BNN, Mort Cohan KA1IU, Stan Waugh N1EHG, Charlie Stevens KA1DHV, Harry McDade W1LMU, Bill Knowles KA1QWE, Roger Tobin N1EYZ, Tim Cadigan (awaiting call), Nels Anderson K1UR, Mark Nelson AJ2X, Tom Kinahan N1CPE.

In the President's message for the January 1988 Spark Gap, I opined about pending legislation and what it means to an individual who has RF energy crossing your property or your person. The issue then was limiting use of Radar Detectors in your car. My thoughts at the time were that if you aim RF energy at me, I darn sure better not be prevented from trying to detect or decode it. I didn't ask for that RF. That issue has since cooled down, but what are your thoughts on that? This issue still gets me hot under the collar.

ABOVE: Bruce Piggott sets up the generator used to power all the radio equipment. Its noise is quieted b a muffler. BELOW: Scott Sminkey uses Morse Code to communicate during the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society's annual field day. BELOW: TOWNSMAN PHOTOS BY DENNIS STEIN

Bruce KC1US getting the generator running. This town owned equipment was registered yearly by the Town of Wellesley. WARS members, before my time liberated it from it's fixed configuration in a town owned building. It served us for many field days and VHF contests. (oh, Bruce did too 😊)

The Hot topic in the Spark Gap in April 1988 was again the use of your ham radio license to coordinate events where any exchange of money was happening.

June 5, 1988 was our WARS trip to ARRL Headquarters in Newington, Ct. We stopped at Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill Ct to make the trip easier for the younger set that came along! (we have video)

April 1988 had Mort Cohan KA1IU bring us information on how to hear the Skitrek expedition cross the North Pole. They were operating on the AO11 satellite and members were encouraged to listen on 145.82 on FM for the expedition's Digitalker send the location of the team.

CJ McDonald WB1BUM coordinated the WARS effort for the May 15 1988 GBARC Charles River Run. CJ was the long time Treasurer for our organization.

In September 1988, Spark Gap Editor Jon Freeman's role has moved to Art Anderson N1FQX.

June 1988 VHF Contest from MT Equinox netted WARS 1305 QSOs with 302 grids (and 156 of them on 6M!) for 481K Points. We were 6th place in the event for Multioperator.

QSO's (Grid Squares)

MHz	W1TKZ	W2SZ/1	K1TR	4U1UN
50	577 (156)	499 (144)	423 (-)	406 (-)
144	497 (53)	673 (-)	490 (-)	392 (-)
220	77 (31)	146 (30)	127 (26)	102 (-)
432	101 (36)	178 (41)	115 (-)	198 (39)
902	18 (9)	21 (12)	21 (9)	21 (11)
1296	31 (13)	46 (19)	41 (14)	47 (16)

(-) means not in top fifteen

Our June 1988 VHF Contest score breakdown

The setup for the June 1988 VHF Contest. Stacked 220 MHz Boomers left to right, Stacked 2m Boomers,, quad UHF boomers, and just visible in the fog is quad 1296 96 element array. Nels K1UR's blue van is an operating position in the near right. Sleeping accommodations far left in the tents.

Field Day 1988 was back to the Sprague School operating 8A (8 simultaneous transmitters on Emergency power). Mort Cohan KA1IU assembled a Sterba Curtain and operated it on 10m. We had a total of 702 QSOs, with the highest number (233) on 15M SSB.

WARS celebrated Independence Day 1988 at the Boston National Historic Park beside the USS Constitution, as a follow up to our successful W200TKZ effort earlier in the year. This is when the USS Constitution does a turnaround cruise. We assembled a message center allowing visitors to send NTS messages of greeting from the event in Charlestown. This was during the 1988 presidential campaign. Our governor and Presidential Candidate Michael Dukakis was in attendance and gave a speech. Your author got in a little bit of hot water with the US Secret Service when unloading radio gear at the front of the Visitor's Center after being asked to move my vehicle away. We sent 109 messages that day. I remained a free man.

Vern Valero ND1Z led a trip to the New England Wireless and Steam Museum on July 30, 1988, the day of their "Yankee Steam up".

Hurricane Gilbert

by Tom Kinahan, N1CPE

On September 16th, as Hurricane Gilbert was crashing into the coast of Mexico, a hardy band of WARS members and others operated a Health and Welfare Inquiry Center at the Wellesley Red Cross. Gilbert had pounded Jamaica and the Yucatan Peninsula during the previous few days, and communication to those areas was impossible. Impossible, that is, unless you were an amateur radio operator.

On Wednesday the 14th, approval was granted by the Red Cross to use the telephone service at their Wellesley Chapter house (where the WARS meets) to take incoming telephone calls from people who have relatives in the storm-ravaged areas. It was not until Friday, however, that a method was devised to get the messages through. On Friday, the press was notified before noon, and many of the Boston radio and TV stations carried information on how to contact us. At 7:00 PM, when we started taking calls, we were in full operation.

NTS traffic was routed by packet to international traffic representatives and to designated stations prepared to deliver health-and-welfare traffic into the affected areas. One two-meter packet station was set up at the Red Cross, and we were linked by the club repeater to several outlying stations, also with packet capability. This net operated until about 11:00 PM.

In all, we discovered that taking full address and telephone information from people is not as easy as one thinks. We had only two incoming telephone lines, which allowed 109 health-and-welfare inquiries during the three or more hours of operation.

We had the invaluable help of Emergency

Medical Services Explorer Post 525, of Wellesley, in manning the phones. Many thanks to their advisor, Karen Clayton, for rounding up the troops.

Plenty of good press was a result. Four local television news stations sent reporters to cover the story, in addition to one radio station and two newspapers. At 10:00 PM Channel 56 (WLVI) carried a nice story, as did channels 5 (WCVB) and 7 (WNEV). Channel 4's (WBZ's) coverage waited until the end of their coverage of the Olympics, at midnight. Both the *Wellesley Townsman* and the *Middlesex News* gave us good coverage, with long articles and pictures.

I think we all learned something. Some learned how to prepare NTS messages correctly, others how to deal with the public, and I, how not to deal with the media. This is why we do message fairs!

Outlying stations ND1Z (Vern Valero) and KA1RWK (Dave Bush) — and a host of others standing by to help if needed — complemented our crew at the Red Cross: Sue Sample (N1FWJ), Frank Caci (N1FWI), Jed Weare (NF1Z), Art Anderson (NT1M), Stan Waugh (N1EHG), Doug Rand (KC1KJ), and wife Phebe, Steve Schwarm (W3EVE), Mort Cohan (KA1IU), Elaine Chase (KA1SAO), C. J. McDonald (WB1BUM), and yours truly (N1CPE). I'm sure I missed somebody....

All this just a week before our next message fair!

On September 24, 1988 WARS again operated from the Boston National Historic Park, near the USS Constitution in Charlestown. We operated a message center at the request of the park (not us reaching out to them!). The event was “Harbor Park Day” We used Packet radio with Dave Bush KA1RWK, Don Koch NT1L, Ged Weare NF1Z supplying packet gear. Traffic was relayed to the N1BGG Packet BBS in Charlestown for destinations across the country. Also supporting this event was Elaine Chase KA1SAO, Art Anderson NT1M, Bob Salow WA1IDA, Denis Guillemette KA1SAR and myself.

WARS Members provided support for the Governor’s Cup Run on October 2nd 1988 in around the Boston common. We requested and were approved to use the Boston 145.23 repeater. 10 Members participated.

The Wellesley Veterans Parade took place on October 16, 1988. Eight members participated.

The WARS vehicle in the Wellesley Veteran’s Parade in 1988.

The November Spark Gap also announced that the Russian Space Station MIR was on the air with a downlink Frequency of 145.550 Mhz, 145.525 Mhz and 145.575 Mhz with 2 watts as U1MIR.

In March 1989, members debated the No-Code ham radio license. Some members wrote articles for the Spark Gap condemning the idea of diluting the ranks of Amateur Radio. Some did not. The longest articles were against no-code. In the end, it’s my opinion that adding no-code operators to Amateur Radio saved it. Now, code is no longer a requirement for any class of license.

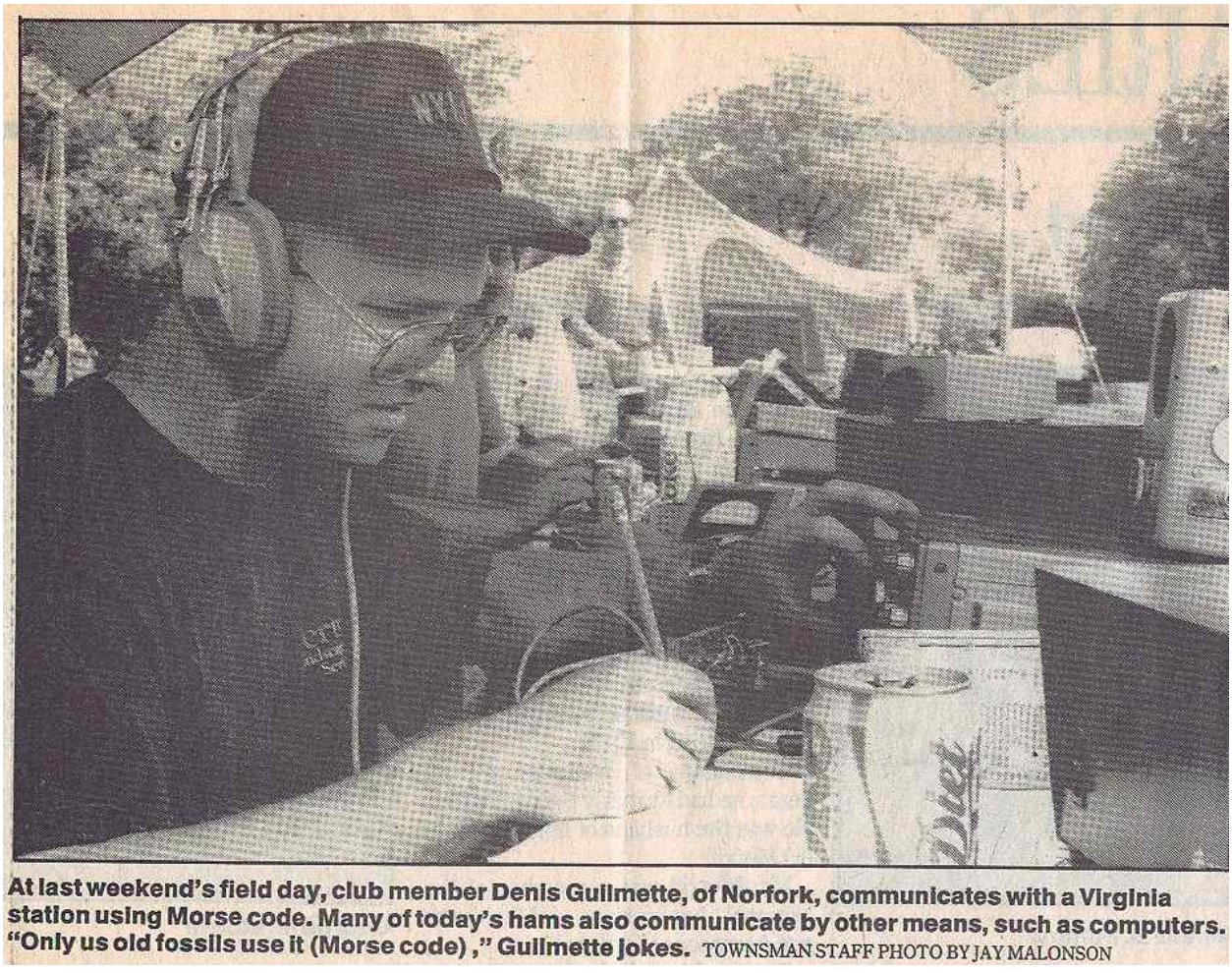
The June 1999 Spark Gap reported a record of 108 WARS members due to the quality and diversity of speakers at our meetings, organized by Kathy Pate KA1IYR and Rita Baker N1DDI.

Vern Valero ND1Z successful VE exam session. On May 20, 1989 VE Exam reported another twenty-eight people sat for exams while nineteen were successful.

Kathy Pate KA1IYR our 1989 Corresponding secretary was elected a life member of the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society. Much of the membership gains in the 1988 timeframe are due to her on the air publicity and outreach for speakers. Kathy was confined to a wheelchair at the time, and seldom able to attend meetings. The motion was offered by John Stacy W1KIM.

The April 1989 Flea market netted the club $410.32 in spite of bad weather.

WARS Field Day 1989 is at the Sprague School ballfields again.



At last weekend's field day, club member Denis Guilmette, of Norfork, communicates with a Virginia station using Morse code. Many of today's hams also communicate by other means, such as computers. "Only us old fossils use it (Morse code)," Guilmette jokes. TOWNSMAN STAFF PHOTO BY JAY MALONSON

Denis KA1SAR operates CW at Field Day 1989

a muffler. BELOW: Scott Sminkey uses Morse Code to communicate during the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society's annual field day. BELOW: TOWNSMAN PHOTOS BY DENNIS STEIN

Scott Sminkey N1GJQ *uses a Vibroplex iambic paddle and ICOM XX radio.*

Sadly, the WARS June VHF Contest effort in June 1989 was abbreviated, due to the passing of Paul Monroe KA1LDV on the eve of the contest while at Mt. Equinox. Paul was a salesman at You-Do-It Electronics in Needham. He passed doing what he loved most, with the W1TKZ VHF contest crew on Mt Equinox. In subsequent years, WARS sponsored a plaque for VHF Contest winners in Paul's name.

Field Day in 1989 was operated by our club at the Sprague School ballfields as in the past. This year we attempted a balloon antenna. We used a helium balloon to elevate a vertical antenna. We had to recall the hard way that long wires generate high levels of static electricity. Check out some of the video of this effort in the club archives, it's hilarious! In the end, the balloon antenna didn't work very well, but we made a total of 525 Phone QSOs and 118 CW QSOs. In the end, no Law enforcement or the FAA were involved.

We again returned to the Boston National Historic Park in Charlestown next to the USS Constitution for a message fair on July 4 as she did her turnaround. We originated 106 messages sent over packet radio to nearby N1BGG Packet BBS.

In October 1989, we learned that the Red Cross building that we had been meeting in and housed our club station would be sold starting in January 1990. Club members were asked for ideas on where to relocate the club at that time.

Hurricane Hugo struck Puerto Rico on September 17, 1989. Then Governor Dukakis remarked publicly that ham radio operators should help. An ARRL Eastern Mass Section response was mounted. Section Emergency Coordinator Barry Porter KB1PA and I did media announcements, and we decided on an operation just like that which WARS had mounted for Hurricane Gilbert recently. This operation was at the Red Cross Blood Center in Dedham, with their large phone bank. Health and welfare messages were received looking for response back from people in the stricken area. We used packet radio to deliver the messages into the NTS system. Bob Salow WA1IDA, Jim Hatherly WA1TBY, Dave Crocker W1TMO were leaders of the effort with Barry and Tom. Participants at the operation were Liz Valero N1FUP, Elaine Chase N1GTB, Don Koch NT1L, Art Anderson NT1M, Vern Valero ND1Z, Joe K2VUI and non-hams (and my sisters) Michele and Kathleen Kinahan. Our efforts were covered by 2 TV stations and 3 radio stations. 88 messages were originated. The PR for this effort was not as great for this event as the Gilbert message fair, which we think had an effect on the message count.

WARS operated W1TKZ on JOTA weekend in November 1989 from the BSA Norumbega Council Camp Nobscot in Framingham. Six WARS Members participated on site: Tom Kinahan N1CPE, Don Koch NT1L, Dave Bush KC1PR, Nathaniel Bush (KC1PR/SON), Scott Sminkey N1GJQ, Bruce KA1TOW and Rich Greenblott.

November Sweepstakes 1989 was the first time we used computer logging at W1TKZ. We logged 125 SSB QSOs.

Another VE Exam was held on December 9, 1989, and twenty-four people sat for exams, and twenty passed at least one part. Vern Valero ND1Z led the VE team of himself, Thomas Burton KX1H, Tim N1FME, Barry Kasindorf WA1YDL, Don Koch NT1L, Art Anderson NT1M and myself.

I hope this review of the years 1985 through 1989 was interesting for members. For more details, be sure to check out the Spark Gap online repository.

I'm really proud of what we did during this time in WARS history. We sat on the shoulders of those that did the WARS message fairs from the Natick Mall in the early 80s. I was a young buck, just out of college, and in my mid to late 20's during this time. The message fairs that we produced provided me with the most pride. We were able to give people some hope that their family members could be found and get back in touch with them and used the message fair format to expose thousands of people to ham radio, in dire times, and some fun times. As a result of our Gilbert, Hugo and other efforts, a new nationwide policy of disaster communications was ultimately established by the ARRL and Red Cross where Health & Welfare communications are best sent from a disaster area outward, rather than into a disaster area.

We did some fun operating events, some technically challenging, pushing our collective technical, operating skills, organizational prowess and even physical stamina.

I can only imagine what some of our members were thinking trusting this 20 something year old kid to lead WARS. I guess it worked out. It was a blast and has made Ham Radio my main

avocation. I will tell people I work with today, as I approach retirement, that I’m a mild-mannered Product Manager by day, but by night, I’m a crazy radio nut! I work to support my radio passion.